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## **BELARUS: CIVILIAN CONTROL OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURES**

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# **BELARUS: CIVILIAN CONTROL OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURES**

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## **1 Defense and National Security Structures in Belarus: the Institutional Setting**

Belarus' security structures are represented by **Chart 1** (see next page). They include the bodies of the top state management, the so-called "power bloc" – the Defense Ministry, the Ministry of the Interior, the State Security Committee, the Ministry for Emergency Situations, State Border Troops Committee, State Customs Committee, the Procurator's Office, as well as several interdepartmental agencies like the Commission on Export Controls and the Commission on Economic Security. There are also several semi-autonomous bodies, dealing with security issues, like the Institute for Social and Political Research and the Center for Law-Making under the Administration of the President, the National Security Institute and some others.

### **1.1 National Security and Defense Structures: an overview**

The armed forces of the Republic of Belarus were created following the decision by the government of March 20, 1992. During the Soviet times Belarus hosted about 1 500 military formations of the Belarusian Military District, which totaled over 240 000 troops. After the dissolution of the USSR Belarus became the most militarized republic of the erstwhile entity. The new independent state could not afford to keep such excessive numbers. Besides, the relevant international agreements stipulated much lower force levels. According to the 1992 Helsinki agreement their maximal figure for Belarus could not exceed 100 000. Already by the end of the 90's force reductions undertaken by the Belarusian government have brought down the original numbers to about 83 000 servicemen.

#### **Table 1. BELARUS' ARMED FORCES<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The Military Balance 2001-2002. The International Institute for Strategic Studies. – London: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 83.

<b>Active</b>	<b>82 900</b>
<b>Reserves</b>	<b>289 500</b>
Army	43 600
Air Force	12 000
Air Defense Force	10 200

## 2 Reductions of Belarus' Armed Forces<sup>2</sup>

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>
Total	100 000	65 000
Servicemen	Over 80 000	50 000

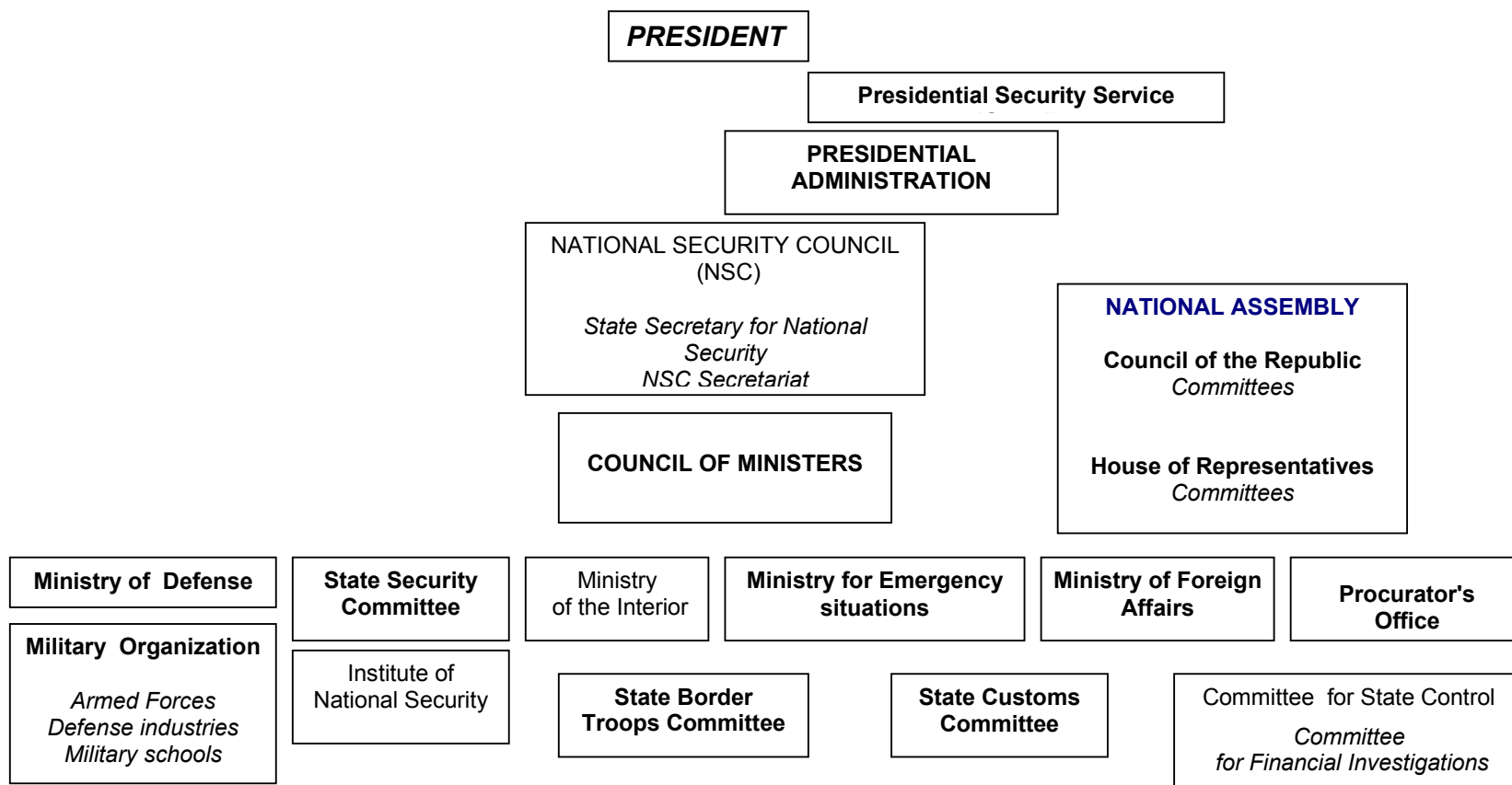
The reformation of the armed forces is carried out in accordance with the "Concept of Building the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus until 2010" and "The Program of the Completion of the Reform of the Armed Forces for the period from 2001 through 2005." The reform differentiated the authorities of the ministry of defense and General Staff. The ministry of defense as the organ of state control is entrusted with the implementation of state policy on questions of defense. It is responsible for their building and development, and also preparation for the accomplishment of the objectives of the armed protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity of state. The General Staff, in its turn, executes operational control of the armed forces, the organization of interaction and coordination of the activity of the armed forces with other military formations.

The changes accomplished include combining the Air and Air defense Forces, downsizing the force structure about 30% from 83,000 to 60,000, transitioning from a conscript to a contract force (which today constitutes 20 per cent of servicemen), and modernizing the command and control structure by creating a Ground Forces Command between the Ministry of Defense and the units in the field (territorial defense forces).

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<sup>2</sup> Gurulev, Serguei. Aktual'nyje Voprosy Reformirovanija Vooruzhennykh Sil Respubliki Belarus (Topical Issues of Reforming Belarus' Armed Forces). Available online: <http://www.mod.mil.by/statya.html>

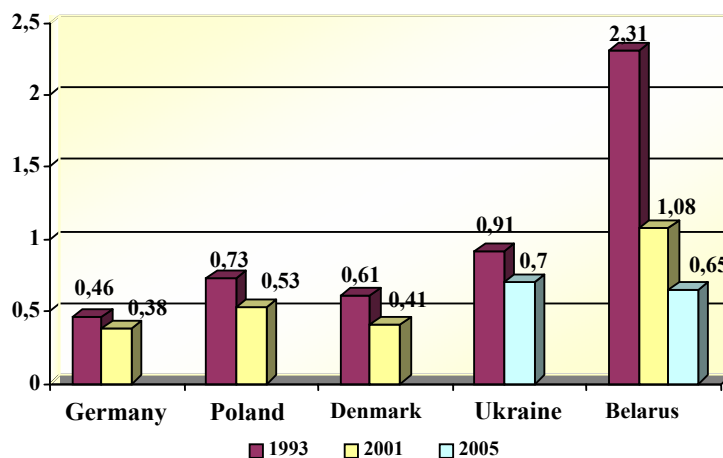
Chart 1. TENTATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF BELARUS' SECURITY STRUCTURES



The current structure of Belarus' Armed Forces includes Ground Forces, the combined Air Force and Air Defense, Rocket and Artillery Forces, Engineer Forces, Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defense Forces, Communication Forces, Radio and Electronic Counterforce units, military schools and MOD enterprises.

Additionally, there have been introduced such novelties as service "in reserve" and territorial forces. Service "in reserve" will be legally formalized by the adoption of the respective law. It implies that highly qualified professionals will not serve full-time, but will be called upon to undergo short-term training sessions. Their total term of service will be from 2 to 3 years. The territorial forces will be deployed during the pre-war and war-time. Alternative service is also planned.

**Figure 1. Correlation of the number of armed forces with the population in some European states<sup>3</sup>**



## PARAMILITARY

**a) Border Troops: 12 000**

**b) Table 3. Ministry of the Interior Forces<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Total number: about **80 000**, including militia and:

Interior forces	<b>10 000</b>
Formation "Guard"	<b>14 000</b>
Committee for the Implementation of Punishment	<b>7 000</b>
State Auto Inspection	<b>2 500</b>

The reforming of the Ministry of the Interior in 2002 envisaged reductions of personnel in the central bodies, strengthening of the directorates of morals, illegal drug trafficking and the criminal militia. Technical services will be gradually manned with civilians. The State Auto Inspection is undergoing reductions, and sergeants are replaced with officers.<sup>5</sup>

In the Fall of 2002 the Ministry of the Interior has been subjected to a comprehensive inspection of its activities directed by the Security Council. Any public organizations or independent inspectors have not been involved.

#### **c) Forces of the Ministry for Emergency Situations**

#### **d) Special Services:**

State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus  
Presidential Security Service

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<sup>4</sup> Belorusskii Rynok. March 4-10, 2002, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

### 3 Elaboration, Adoption and Implementation of Conceptual Documents Dealing with National Security<sup>6</sup>

**Table 4. THE CURRENT LEGISLATION ON BELARUS' ARMED FORCES: (selected documents)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The National Security Concept</b> Adopted by the Presidential decree of July 17, 2001 N 390 - [p30000390]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presidential executive order approving the Plan of Measures on the Implementation of the National Security Concept</b> - August 14, 2002</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On the Adoption of the Military Doctrine of the Republic of Belarus"</b> Signed by President on January 3, 2002 N 4-3 - [h10200074] Adopted by the House of Representatives on December 12, 2001 Approved by the Council of the Republic on December 20, 2001</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On Defense"</b> Adopted on November 3, 1992 Amended on July 17, 2002</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Concept of Territorial Defense</b> Approved by a presidential Decree in November 2001 (incorporated in the Law on Defense)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus"</b> Adopted on November 11, 1992 <u>Amendments:</u> September 4, 1996 November 9, 1999 July 24, 2002</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On the Martial Law"</b> Adopted in the first reading by the House of Representatives on October 3, 2002</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> For the analysis of the earlier situation see: Vyachaslau Paznyak, "Problemy Demokraticheskogo Kontrolya nad Voennoi Sferoi v Respublike Belarus" (Problems of the Democratic Control over the Military Sphere in the Republic of Belarus). In: *Demokraticheskii Kontrol' nad Voennoi Sferoi v Rossii i Stranakh SNG* (Democratic Control over the Military Sphere in Russia and the CIS). Ed. by A. Nikitin. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and Centre for Political and International Studies (Moscow) – Moscow: Eslan Publishers, 2002 and Vyachaslau Paznyak, "Struktura i Praktika Parlamentskogo Kontrolya za Politikoi i Deyatel'nost'u Iсполnitelnoi Vlasti v Voennoi Sfere" (The Structure and Procedures of Parliamentary Control over the Policies and Practices of the Executive in the Military Sphere: the Case of Belarus). In: *Parlamentskii Kontrol' nad Voennoi Sferoi v Novykh Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstvakh. Analiticheskiye Doklady* (Parliamentary Control over the Military Sphere in the New Independent States. Analytical Papers). Ed. by A. Nikitin. – Moscow: Centre for Political and International Studies, 1998.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On Mobilization Preparations and Mobilization"</b>  Adopted on October 26, 2000 N 449-3 - [h10000449]  <u>Amendments:</u>  May 16, 2001 N 23-3  Adopted by the House of Representatives on October 2, 2000  Approved by the Council of the Republic on October 12, 2000</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On General Conscription and Military Service"</b>  Adopted on November 5, 1992. N 1914-XII - [v19201914]  <u>Amendments:</u>  April 13, 1995 N 3735-XII  May 12, 1999 N 260-3  December 31, 1999 N 351-3  May 15, 2000 N 385-3</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Law "On the Status of Servicemen"</b>  Adopted on November 13, 1992 N1939-XII - [v19201939]  <u>Amendments:</u>  March 25, 1993 N 2262-XII  February 22, 1995 N 3610-XII  March 22, 1995 N 3685-XII  Suspended by the Presidential Decree of September 1, 1995 N 349  January 6, 1998 N 124-3  December 31, 1999 N 351-3</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus</b>  Adopted on July 9, 1999 N 275-3 - [hk9900275]  Adopted by the House of Representatives on June 2, 1999  Approved by the Council of the Republic on June 24, 1999</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Criminal-Executive Code of the Republic of Belarus</b>  Adopted on January 11, 2000 N 365-3 - [hk0000365]  Adopted by the House of Representatives on December 14, 1999  Approved by the Council of the Republic on December 22, 1999</li> </ul>

On August 14, 2002 President Lukashenko issued an executive order approving the Plan of Measures on the Implementation of the National Security Concept. In the political field, the plan envisages measures on finalizing the succession of the Republic of Belarus regarding the treaties of the former USSR with the European states on mutual legal assistance in civil and criminal cases. With a view to enhance protection of the rights and interests of the Belarusian citizens the work on the country's accession to the basic treaties in the criminal-law field, concluded within the framework of the UN and the Council of Europe, is to be continued. Considerable attention in the document is given to ensuring security in the economic field.

Enhancing environmental security and protection of natural resources are the issues placed under special control with the country's leadership. In this context, by 2005 it

is planned to draft the Concept and the Plan of Action on the creation of the national ecological network, the State Programme on ensuring the radiation protection and limiting the medical exposure of the public. Annual ecological propaganda arrangements are also envisaged. An information analytical centre for monitoring emergency situations is to be founded within the State system of prevention and elimination of emergency situations, and an automated management system "Expertise" is to be set up with the data bank on the state of environment, natural resources and anthropogenic impact on individual regions of the republic. The ministries of industry, of natural resources and environment protection, of foreign affairs, the National Academy of Sciences are to be involved in drafting and improving the legislative acts on implementation of Belarus' commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Draft programmes will be elaborated to protect intellectual property in the Republic of Belarus, to create a universally accessible Internet portal of official information on the activity of the state, to develop TV and radio industry are aimed at ensuring the information-security.<sup>7</sup>

What provisions pertaining to civil control of the armed forces are contained in the new national security concept and the revised military laws?

Article 4 of the National Security Concept qualifies civil control over the armed forces as one of the vital state interests in the military sphere. This provision, however, is not elaborated any further. Article 8.3 lists among the main functions of the system of ensuring national security "control over the activities of state organs, organizations, including public associations, as well as citizens, involved in the sphere of national security, and informing citizens on issues of ensuring national security."

Article 8.3 of the Military Doctrine lists among the principles of ensuring military security "a combination of a centralized management of the state's military organization and civil control over its activities."

Article 6 of the Law on the Armed Forces lists among the principles of building and of the activities of the armed forces glasnost and openness for civilian control, that

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<sup>7</sup> Press Service of the President of the Republic of Belarus  
[http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/press/p08\\_2.shtml](http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/press/p08_2.shtml)

ensure participation of all citizens of Belarus in boosting the country's defense capabilities. According to Article 17 of the Law control over the armed forces is executed by the President, the Council of Ministers, as well as other state organs within the limits of their competence. This new version of the Law does not mention Parliament, which was in place in the previous draft text.

Compared to the draft military laws of 1997 where the need to implement the principle of democratic control over the armed forces was stressed and a special provision on parliamentary control was incorporated, the revised package of military laws features a radical consolidation of controlling functions with the President.

This departure from the principles of civil control is even more stark if we refer to the military laws adopted in Belarus in the early 90's.

In August 2002 the Draft Law on Civil Control and Management of the Military Organization was sent to the MOD, National Security Council and the House of representatives of the National Assembly - the lower chamber of Belarusian Parliament. The Draft was prepared by a little-known Belarusian NGO called "Citizens for National Security." Generally, the bill repeated the structure and contents of the corresponding Russian draft law, but surpassed the latter in the scope and radicalism. In a nutshell, it turned out to be ultrarevolutionary for today's Belarus and implied changing of the Constitution itself. The reaction of the authorities was unanimous, and even without any formal examination at the Parliament the draft law was declared unnecessary and premature.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 5. Norms of civil control, envisaged by the draft**

**Law on Civil Control and Management of Military Organization and Activity**

<b>Expanding the Parliament's rights</b>
Appointing a civil servant as Defense Minister who, in turn, appoints civil inspectors to inspect any activity within the Armed Forces.
Forming parliamentary commissions empowered to investigate violations of civil rights and liberties in the armed forces.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Vrazhkin, Yu. "Zakonoproekt iz budushego napravlen v nikuda" (The Bill from the Future is Leading Nowhere). – *Vo Slavu Rodiny*, August 30, 2002; Nezvanov A. "Civil Control Over Army Good But Premature." *The Belarus Today*, August 6-12, 2002, p.4; Seroshtan, V. "Armija Budet Professional'noi, no ne Najomnoi" (The Army will be Professional but not Mercenary). *7 Dnej*, September 14, 2002, p.3;

Conducting parliamentary hearings on military construction.
Establishing special commissions for introducing changes in the military legislation.
Empowering deputy investigation of activities carried out by state bodies including security structures.
Appointing a plenipotentiary out of deputies of the House of Representatives for a term of four years to ensure observance of the constitutional rights and liberties in the army as well as of carrying military service in accordance with Belarus' legislation, to analyze complaints and prepare problem-solving recommendations, to maintain relations with public organizations and the mass media, informing them, if necessary, on its activities.
Empowering the plenipotentiary to request and receive any documents and materials necessary for considering claim from any officer of the Armed Forces and military bodies or directly from military units. The plenipotentiary enjoys the right to be received without delay by officers of the Armed Forces, military bodies and formations, enjoys the right to visit freely and without prior notification military units, as well as attend meetings of the commanding bodies and take measures to protect military personnel in accordance with the effective legislation.
<b>Expanding the rights of the executive bodies</b>
Authorizing the Committee of State Control to exercise control over just and rational spending of budget funds allotted for ensuring national security and carrying out military activity.
<b>Expanding the rights of non-state actors and civil society</b>
Granting political parties and public associations the right to request and freely receive any information, documents or materials not bearing state or military secret from military command and other bodies, enterprises, establishments and organizations carrying military activities.

### 3.1 (D)evolution of the Role of the National Assembly (Parliament)

On October 9, 2002, on the eve of examining the bill "On the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus," in the second reading at the House of Representatives, President Lukashenko warned against any encroachments of branches of power on each other and against intrusion by them into each other's field of action. As to the issue of enlarging the powers of the parliament, the Belarusian leader reminded that "we have a strong presidential republic, where President is the Head of the State invested with wide powers in accordance with the Constitution... The Parliament must not and cannot tackle the issue of balancing the presidential powers because it runs contrary to the Constitution."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Press Service of the President of the Republic of Belarus  
<http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/press/10.shtml>

#### **4 The Role of National Non-Governmental Institutions Specializing in Studying Security Problems and Preparing Recommendations in this Field**

Parties and Civil Society Structures: an overview

**Table 6. Political Parties in Belarus**

*As of February 18, 2002 the following 18 political parties are registered and function:*

two Communist parties	the Liberal-Democratic Party
three Social Democratic parties	the Women's Party
two Ecological parties	the United Civic Party
two parties of Labour and Justice	the Patriotic Party
one party of social and sports orientation	the Agrarian Party
two parties of the Belarusian Popular Front	the Republican Party.

There are 39 nation-wide trade unions and 19 trade unions of the enterprises.

There are 2025 of NGO's in Belarus, including:  
international - 178;  
republican - 741;  
regional - 114;  
district (municipal) - 929;  
other local - 63.

There have been created and are now functioning 14 unions of NGO's.

**Table 7. NGO's areas of activity**

31 women's public amalgamations	29 - children's
100 - youth activities	56 – veteran
78 - social support of handicapped people	76 - national minorities amalgamations
114 – professional	19 - military-patriotic
31 - creative unions	154 - cultural and educational
396 – sports	281- charity
41 - defence of human rights and freedoms	53 - health care
40 - friendship and international cooperation	100 - amateurs' associations
105 - science and technology	44 – ecological
39 – Chernobyl	6 – agricultural
232 NGO's are oriented to other areas	

The official statistics makes it a point, that political parties, trade unions and NGO's use symbols on a wide scale. Overall, 975 symbols t have been registered. They include: 831 emblems, 77 flags, 29 pennons, 26 badges, 9 anthems, and 3 ties.<sup>10</sup>

The following few Belarusian NGO's have been dealing with security issues:

1. The National Center for Strategic Initiatives "East-West" (established in 1993) - later renamed Analytical Center "Strategy" has managed to maintain close contacts with governmental economic experts and to side with the opposition on political issues
2. The Development and Security Research Institute (DSRI) (established in 1994) has closely cooperated with the Belarusian government in its activities.
3. The International Institute for Policy Studies (IIPS) (established in 1995). The IIPS organized several international seminars together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on conversion and export controls and has maintained working contacts with the MFA and the DOD.
4. Support Center for Associations and Foundations (SCAF) (established in 1996). SCAF has conducted landmine monitor research in Belarus and apparently maintains working contacts with Belarusian governmental agencies.
5. Citizens for National Security (CNS) (established in 1998)

The first three centers have been more active in organizing seminars and conferences with the participation of experts from the government. Also, they have published conference materials and journals.

Besides, some new centers have been established:

- Center for International Studies of the Belarusian State University (established in 2000)
- Center for European and Transatlantic Studies of the European Humanities University – a non-state university - (established in 2000)

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<sup>10</sup> [Official Site of the President of the Republic of Belarus -  
http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/comment/ngo.shtml](http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/comment/ngo.shtml)

With the support of the Foreign Ministry the former has organized a number of seminars and conferences on Belarus foreign policy, including security aspects, while the latter has not been visible so far.

Independent sociological research centers "NOVAK" and the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS) have regularly included security-related issues in their monitoring of the public opinion in Belarus.

Generally, due to the political situation in Belarus, interaction of the state with political parties and NGO's has fitted two patterns:

1. ignoring, attempting to put under control, applying sanctions, closing, imprisoning activists;
2. the second pattern refers basically to experts and analysts who may sit next to each other at conferences and seminars in Belarus and abroad. This experience is, however, mixed. State bodies are cautious to invite independent analysts to join their activities. NGO's, on the other hand, are much more open.

So far, there is a lack of mutual trust, and no common ground for a productive cooperation has been created. State experts are generally sceptical about the independent expertise and deplore what they judge as an irreconcilable negativism towards the official policies. This seriously undermines prospects for the shaping of an expert community bringing together a wide spectrum of alternatives.

Overall, under the current conditions cooperation among governmental and non-governmental organizations on the institutional level is limited and often problematic. One thing is certain, though. It is the fact, that state agencies are not completely deaf to independent analysis and are monitoring the newly available materials.

### **The Mass Media and the Control of Security Structures**

1212 periodicals (newspapers - 778, magazines - 379, bulletins - 54, catalogue -1) and five information agencies are registered in Belarus as of February 1, 2002. 2/3 out of the total number are non-state owned periodicals. 170 TV and radio broadcasting programmes are registered at present (120 - broadcasting, 50

telecasting), 114 of them being state-owned, while 56 - non-state owned.

<b>Table 8. Registered printed-word media</b> as of January 1, 2002 <b>1223 registered media include:</b>	
state-owned	373
non-state owned	850
Political	287
periodicals of political parties	4
periodicals of NGO's	112
periodicals of religious organizations	29
owned by private persons	361

All the Belarusian periodicals are printed in this country. Non-state owned publications can conclude a contract for being printed by the state printing-houses. At present the state supports nearly forty periodicals by granting subsidies from the budget for their issue. Five public and political newspapers are self-supporting.<sup>11</sup>

The situation with the mass media with regard to security structures is complicated. First of all, the mass media are politically engaged and are consequently divided, the lion' share belonging to the state. So, in the case of Belarus the mass media is not the "fourth power," but, rather, an additional instrument in the government's toolbox.

Only the governmental mass media have specialized publications and radio and TV programs dealing with security issues. For instance, various aspects of the activities of the armed forces are covered in a journal "The Army," a newspaper "Vo Slavu Rodiny" (for the glory of Motherland), a TV program "Arsenal," and some others. State-owned mass media tend to be mild or positive in their reporting and are often superficial.

The real function of public control over the security sector is performed - understandably, to a limited extent - by non-state newspapers. Unfortunately, their number and circulation are growing smaller for many, mainly political, reasons. While they are trying to "open up" the state, the state is closing them down. The remaining nation-wide non-state newspapers covering security issues are "Narodnaya Volya,"

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<sup>11</sup> [Official Site of the President of the Republic of Belarus -  
http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/comment/smi.shtml](http://www.president.gov.by/eng/president/comment/smi.shtml)



“Svobodnyje Novosti-Plus,” “The Belarus Today,” “Belorusskii Rynok,” “Belorusskaja Delovaja Gazeta,” and “Belorusskaja Gazeta.” Their peculiarity is that they publish predominantly reports and short critical articles, but seldom offer analysis and political recommendations.

Journalists, specializing in security matters are very few both in state and non-state mass media.

As for NGO's, they publish only two journals dealing with security: “the Vector” of the International Institute for Policy Studies and “Belarus in the World” of the Research and Development Institute of Belarus. Other NGO's publish such materials randomly.

## **6 Influence of International Environment on National Security Structures**

The influence of international environment on Belarusian security structures is manifold. With regard to such key prerequisite of democratic control as transparency, of great importance is the country's participation in international arms control agreements. Belarus is bound by international legal acts on information exchange, in particular, by the decisions of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation No.13/97 and No. 8/98 (on arms and equipment export/import), No. 4/98 (answers to questions on the Code of Conduct relating to military and political aspects of security), No. 20/95 (on policy in the sphere of arms and equipment export), No. 5/96 (on ratification of Chemical Convention), No.14/97 (answers to questions relating to anti-personnel mines and UN General Assembly Resolution No.46/36 L (on arms and equipment export/import) and No. 40/91 L (on military budget). Belarus signed the Open Sky Treaty, the Lisbon Protocol to START I the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction (Chemical Convention), the Protocol on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices with Amendments to Convention On "Non-Humane" Conventional Arms (Mines Protocol), The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTB Treaty), the Agreement On the Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, as well as assumed the corresponding obligations under the 1992, 1994 and 1996 Vienna Documents of negotiations on confidence and security-building measures (Vienna Document), Global Information Exchange of

28 November 1994, the OSCE Document On Small Arms and Light Weapons of 24 November 2000 (LSA Document).

Belarus participates in an exchange of information and notification via diplomatic channels and specially developed round-the-clock communication. It provides information within the framework of the CFE Treaty, the Vienna Document and the Global Exchange of Military Information.

The influence of the international environment on Belarus' security structures is contradictory.

- Firstly, it is perceived as hostile and dangerous
- Secondly, it pushes towards cooperation on such issues as international terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration and some others. After 9/11 bilateral and regional interaction on new security threats has been intensified.
- Thirdly, the threat of terrorism leads to misconceptions that strengthening the armed forces is a logical and necessary countermeasure.

The overall inadequate level of cooperation of Belarus with the West and with Western and even wider key international organizations, such as the OSCE, because of Belarus' domestic political situation, negatively tells on the adequacy of awareness and perceptions of Belarusian security structures about the international security environment, which leads to their greater parochialism and limits options for transformations in the security sector.

### **Conclusions:**

1. The current stage of the development of Belarus' political system is not conducive to the shaping of a system of democratic control over the security sector. The main thrust of contending political forces over the last several years has been to ensure control over the state at large rather than democratic control over the armed forces. This struggle resulted in a considerable consolidation of state powers at the expense of civil society.
2. The military reform, which is underway in Belarus, leaves out the issue of introducing democratic control.

3. It is an obvious fact that compared to the situation of the early 90's and even to the period of 1997-99, there is a regression in the process of shaping democratic control mechanisms over security sector in Belarus.
4. Expectations that in the context of the bilateral integration under the influence of Russia the political system of Belarus would become more open and the military cooperation would bring to the fore issues of democratic control have not come true. Commenting on the issue, Mr. Vladimir Turdenev, Director of the Second CIS Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed a previous statement by Defense Minister Serguei Ivanov to the effect that Russia and Belarus will be reforming their force structure in a synchronized manner. He added, however, that parliamentary control over this process would be carried out in accordance with each country's legislation.<sup>12</sup>

Some developments in 2001-2002 have demonstrated serious problems along the way to the shaping of a viable model of civil-military relations in Belarus under the exiting political conditions.

On the one hand, an attempt by the Belarusian legislature to make a step forward to setting a precedent for a public debate over the draft law on information security failed and was discouraged both due to the draft's substantive drawbacks and also because of a severe criticism from political opposition forces.

On the other hand, the text of the draft law on civil-military relations offered by a Belarusian NGO encountered a bitter and unanimous rebuff from the government, revealing both the lack of experience of NGO experts and the System's recalcitrance to cooperate with non-governmental structures and the lack of trust in outsiders. The latter may have a lasting negative effect for further legislative initiatives on democratic control over the security sector.

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<sup>12</sup> An unofficial comment given to a Belarusian journalist.

To sum up, the following issues related to democratic control over the security sphere in Belarus remain topical:

- acknowledging and formalizing by law the provision that democratic control over the security sphere is an integral part of ensuring security of the individual, society, and the state;
- achieving greater transparency of the decisions and activities of state structures in the security sphere, starting with budgetary allocations;
- incorporating the problematique of democratic control in the guidelines of military reform;
- establishing a constructive dialogue among governmental and international non-governmental experts in civil-military relations, shaping the Belarusian component of the international strategic community;
- developing adequate perceptions of today's security issues through open discussions, publications, seminars, means of information and education;
- finally, consistently applying the principles of the democratic development to Belarus' political system and acknowledging in practice the interdependence of the level of public security on the one hand, and the democratic standards of state and public institutions.

The case of Belarus poses a number of crucial questions with regard to civil-military relations:

- can the security sphere be democratized without the democratization of the political system?
- should the political system be democratized first as a prerequisite for a success with the security sector?
- can the introduction of democratic control become the starting point for democratization of the political system?

Answers to these questions are not as obvious as they might seem to be.



Established in 2000 on the initiative of the Swiss government, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), encourages and supports States and non-State governed institutions in their efforts to strengthen democratic and civilian control of armed and security forces, and promotes international cooperation within this field, initially targeting Euro-Atlantic regions.

The Centre collects information, undertakes research and engages in networking activities in order to identify problems, to establish lessons learned and to propose the best practices in the field of democratic control of armed forces and civil-military relations. The Centre provides its expertise and support to all interested parties, in particular governments, parliaments, military authorities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic circles.

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